

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material by simultaneously molding a plurality of sheets of prepreg cut out in a predetermined shape, the prepreg sheets having a large number of continuous single direction resins, the method comprising the steps of:

(1) forming a continuous plurality of notches or cutouts from a center portion to outer circumference in respective prepregs so as to form at least one set of a partially separated flap and a residual portion for each prepreg;

(2) arranging the respective prepregs to be laminated at predetermined portions of a press die using partially separated flaps of the prepregs as positioning pieces;

(3) forming a first desired three-dimensional shape by pressing the partially separated flaps of the respective prepregs; and

(4) forming a second desired three-dimensional shape as a whole by overlapping end edge parts of residual portions on the partially separated flaps and pressing them;

wherein the notches and cutouts between the respective plurality of prepregs forming notches and cutouts to be laminated are formed in such a manner that cut edges in a center side are spaced at a distance of 2 mm or longer from one another.

2-6. (canceled)

7. (original) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 1, wherein a width of the partially separated flaps formed by the notches or cutouts is made to be parallel or narrowed toward the outer circumference.

8. (previously presented) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 1, wherein a reinforcing fiber to be employed for the prepreg is at least one kind of fibers selected from carbon fiber, glass fiber, and organic fiber.

9. (previously presented) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcing fiber to be employed for the prepreg is a unidirectional material of the reinforcing fiber arranged evenly in one direction or a material having a fabric structure.

10. (previously presented) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 1, wherein a matrix resin to be employed for the prepreg is a thermosetting resin.

11. (original) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 10, wherein the thermosetting resin is an epoxy resin composition.

12. (original) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 11, wherein the epoxy resin composition comprises the following component A, component B, component C, and component D:

component A: an epoxy resin;

component B: an amine compound (component B-1) having at least one sulfur atom in a molecule and/or a reaction product (component B-2) of an amine compound having at least one sulfur atom in a molecule with an epoxy resin;

component C: an urea compound; and

component D: a dicyanodiamide.

13. (original) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 12, wherein the contents of the sulfur atom and the component C in the epoxy resin composition are 0.2 to 7% by mass and 1 to 15% by mass, respectively.

14. (currently amended) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 12, wherein the component C is a granular material with an average particle diameter of 150 μm or smaller.

15. (previously presented) A preliminarily molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material obtained by the method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 10, wherein a thermosetting resin is un-cured.

16. (previously presented) A molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material obtained by the method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 10, wherein a thermosetting resin is cured.

17. (original) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material, the method including the step (5) of:

further heating and pressurizing the preliminarily molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 16 for curing and molding.

18. (original) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 17, wherein the step (5) is carried out by compression molding.

19. (original) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 18, wherein the compression molding is carried out at molding pressure of 20 kgf/cm² or higher and molding time in 15 minutes.

20. (previously presented) A method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 16, wherein the molding temperature at the time of the compression molding is 120°C or higher.

21. (previously presented) A molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material obtained by uniting and curing a plurality of laminated preregs by the method of producing a molded article of a fiber-reinforced composite material according to claim 17.